

I CLAIM:

1. A string tree, prior to complete assembly thereof, comprising:

(A) a substantially planar wheel-like base defining a base rim, a base hub, and base connection means connecting said base rim and said base hub, said base rim additionally defining a plurality of spaced base engagement means;

(B) a substantially planar wheel-like hanger defining a hanger rim, a hanger hub, and a hub connection means connecting said hanger rim and said hanger hub, said hanger rim additionally defining a plurality of spaced hanger engagement means, said hanger rim having a diameter substantially less than that of said base rim;

(C) a pole means for releasable attachment at one end to said base hub and at an opposite end to said hanger hub for thereby connecting said hubs in a vertically spaced relationship;

(D) a light set defining a common means and a plurality of flexible light strings extending therefrom, each said light string containing lamps, being in electrical communication with said common means, and extending from a respective one of one of said hanger engagement means and said base engagement means, said common means being secured to a corresponding one of said hanger rim and said base rim; and

(E) means for releasably manually securing the free end of each of said light strings to a respective other one of said hanger engagement means and said base engagement means;

whereby, when said string tree is completely assembled, said pole means vertically supports said hanger above said base with said light strings extending generally downwardly and outwardly between said hanger engagement means and said base engagement means such that said light strings cumulatively provide the general appearance of an upright truncated cone.

2. The string tree of Claim 1 additionally including a tree-topper ornament removably securable to the top of said pole means.

3. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said ornament is electrically illuminatable and in electrical communication with said light set.

4. The string tree of Claim 3 wherein an additional light string of said light set is in electrical communication with both said common wire means and said ornament.

5. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said common means is secured to said hanger rim, each said light sting extends from a respective one of said hanger engagement means, and said securing means is for manually releasably securing the free end of each said light string to a respective one of said base engagement means.

6. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said base connecting means is a plurality of circumferentially-spaced base spokes.

7. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said hanger connecting means is a plurality of circumferentially-spaced hanger spokes.

8. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said base rim is generally circular.

9. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said hanger rim is generally circular.

10. The string tree of Claim 1 wherein said pole means is formed of a plurality of segments configured and dimensioned to be assembled together

11. The string tree of Claim 1 additionally comprising:

(F) at least one substantially planar wheel-like intermediate structure defining an intermediate rim, an intermediate hub for releasable attachment to said pole means, and a plurality of intermediate connection means connecting said intermediate rim and said intermediate hub, said intermediate rim additionally defining a plurality of circumferentially-spaced intermediate engagement means;

said intermediate rim being of appreciable width, and each said light string being capable of generally horizontally traversing the width of said intermediate rim and being securable to at least a respective one of said intermediate engagement means;

whereby, when said string tree is completely assembled, said pole means vertically supports said intermediate structure between said hanger and said base with said light strings defining a generally horizontal jag between said hanger and said base such that said light strings cumulatively provide the general appearance of a vertical series of truncated cones.

12. The string tree of Claim 11 wherein, when said string tree is completely assembled, each said light string engages a respective one of said intermediate engagement means and inwardly and generally horizontally traverses the width of said intermediate rim such that said light strings cumulatively provide the general appearance of a stack of upright truncated cones.

13. The string tree of Claim 11 wherein said intermediate rim has an outer diameter intermediate said hanger and base diameters.

14. A string tree composite comprising:

(A) a plurality of the string trees of Claim 1 ; and

(B) means for assembling the plurality of pole means of said plurality of string trees to form a single pole joining said plurality of string trees along a vertical axis; whereby, when said composite is completely assembled, said pole vertically supports said plurality of string trees, one above the other, to form the composite.

15. The composite of Claim 14 wherein the plurality of light sets of said plurality of string trees are electrically independent and separate.

16. The composite of Claim 14 wherein the plurality of light sets of said plurality of string trees are in electrical communication to form a single large light set.

17. A method of assembling a string tree comprising the steps of:

(A) providing the unassembled string tree of Claim 1;

(B) assembling the pole means and the hubs with one end of the pole means secured to the base hub and the other end of the pole means secured to the hanger hub, thereby to vertically support the hanger above the base; and

(C) extending the light strings from a respective one of the hanger and base engagement means, and manually releasably securing each free end of the light strings to a respective other one of the hanger and base engagement means, thereby to cause the light strings cumulatively to give the appearance of an upright truncated cone.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein the light strings are allowed to depend from the hanger engagement means and the free ends are secured to the base engagement means.

19. A method of assembling a string tree comprising the steps of:

(A) providing the unassembled string tree of Claim 11;

(B) assembling the pole means and the hubs with one end of the pole means secured to the base hub, an intermediate portion of the pole means secured to the intermediate hub, and the other end of the pole means secured to the hanger hub, thereby to vertically support the hanger above the base with the intermediate structure therebetween.

(C) extending the light strings from a respective one of the hanger and base engagement means and across the intermediate rim, and manually releasably securing each free end of the light strings to a respective other one of the hanger and base engagement means, thereby to cause the light strings cumulatively to give the appearance of a vertical series of upright truncated cones.

20. The method of Claim 19 additionally including the step of engaging each intermediate portion of each light string with a respective intermediate engagement means.